

Amendments to the Claims

1-61. (canceled)

62. (currently amended) A method of stabilizing tissue comprising the steps of:
positioning an implant in a patient's body at an implantation site ~~such that the implant creates a space between a body tissue and at least one other object;~~ and
expanding the implant by absorbing liquid into the implant while the implant is at the implantation site ~~disposed in the patient's body such that the space between the body tissue and at least one other object is at least maintained.~~

63-68. (canceled)

69. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein the implant is at least partially formed of a biodegradable material.

70-75. (canceled)

76. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 62 further including the step of forming at least a portion of a spacer of expandable material, said step of positioning an implant in a patient's body includes positioning the spacer in the patient's body, said step of expanding the implant includes expanding expandable material of the spacer.

77-115.(canceled)

116. (new) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein the implantation site is at least partially delimited by tissue.

117. (new) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein the step of expanding the implant

includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the tissue and implant is decreased.

118. (new) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the tissue.

119. (new) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the tissue.

120. (new) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein the tissue is bone.

121. (new) A method as set forth in claim 120 wherein the step of expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the bone and implant is decreased.

122. (new) A method as set forth in claim 120 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the bone.

123. (new) A method as set forth in claim 120 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the bone.

124. (new) A method as set forth in claim 62 further including expanding the implant after compressing the implant.

125. (new) A method of stabilizing tissue comprising the steps of:
compressing an implant;
positioning the implant in a patient's body at an implantation site; and
expanding the implant at the implantation site after compressing the implant.

126. (new) A method as set forth in claim 125 wherein the implantation site is at least partially delimited by tissue.

127. (new) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the tissue and the implant is decreased.
128. (new) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the tissue.
129. (new) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the tissue.
130. (new) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein the tissue is bone.
131. (new) A method as set forth in claim 130 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the bone and implant is decreased.
132. (new) A method as set forth in claim 130 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the bone.
133. (new) A method as set forth in claim 130 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the bone.
134. (new) A method as set forth in claim 125 further including expanding the implant by absorbing liquid into the implant while the implant is at the implantation site.